

Dear 7<sup>th</sup> graders,

As I explained in class, you need to read a biography of one of the historical figures we will be encountering in the first quarter of our history class, when we will be studying the “Gilded Age” and the “Progressive Era” of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In place of a book report, I’ve decided to have you prepare a slide presentation on your historical person. This way you will be able to share what you learned with the rest of the class, and you will get a chance to practice preparing and delivering a presentation, a skill that will come in handy at later points in 7<sup>th</sup> grade history, as well as in life in general.

Your presentation should be about five minutes long and should effectively communicate what you’ve learned about your person. This should include the following:

- childhood and formative influences
- personality, including both strengths and weaknesses
- accomplishments
- legacy or lasting impact

I went over my expectations for slide presentations with you when you prepared presentations on Roman engineering in 6th grade. A key to success is to avoid loading too much writing onto your slides-- to limit the text on your slides to titles and bullet points, and to provide generous visual support for everything that you share with your

audience. Your text can be in speaker notes at the bottom of your slides or in a separate manuscript. You may speak from a detailed outline or write out a complete narrative to accompany your slides. The presentations are due when you return to school. I will look over the presentations at that point, and might ask for revision before you share your presentation with the class during a humanities block.

Here is the list of historical figures for you to choose from. I will briefly talk with you about most of these figures in the last week of school, but you can look them up easily enough to refresh your memory. I put an asterisk next to the biographies that I have and would be happy to loan. In some cases, I would give you two short books that would work well as a pair. You could also find biographies of many of these figures in your local library, order through your library on interlibrary loan, or purchase online, so don't feel that you need to limit your choice to the biographies I currently have available. If you're choosing your own biography, use your judgment to find one that is appropriate for your reading level-- not too long and technical, but not a picture book either. You can often read a sample of a biography on Amazon Prime and read reviews of the book, so that is a good place to start, even if you then order the book from inter-library loan or a local bookstore.

I've included a chart for you to indicate your choice. If it is a biography that I have and you would like to borrow it, you should indicate that as well and you will receive the book before you depart for the summer. Up to two of you can choose to learn about the same person, though it would be nice for you to spread out and cover a range of figures so that you can all learn more from each other when you present..

## **Scientists and Inventors:**

\*Charles Darwin

Marie Curie

\*Thomas Edison

\*George Westinghouse

\*The Wright Brothers

\*Alexander Graham Bell

## **Reformers:**

Jane Addams

\*Eugene Debs

Ida B. Wells

\*Hellen Keller

Ida Tarbell

\*Susan B. Anthony

\*Elizabeth Cady Stanton

\*Nellie Bly

Jacob Riis

\*Henry Bergh

\*Teddy Roosevelt

\*John Muir

\*Booker T. Washington

# Signup Sheet:

Figure	Name	Borrowed?
Charles Darwin		
Marie Curie		
*Thomas Edison		
*George Westinghouse		
*The Wright Brothers		
*Alexander Graham Bell		
*Jane Addams		
*Eugene Debs		
Ida B. Wells-Barnett		
*Hellen Keller		
*Ida Tarbell		
*Susan B. Anthony		
*Elizabeth Cady Stanton		
*Nellie Bly		
Jacob Riis		
*Henry Bergh		
*Teddy Roosevelt		
*John Muir		
*Booker T. Washington		

I think that pretty well covers it, but let me know if you have questions!

Sincerely, Dr. Freeberg